

Recording opens with introductory remarks by unidentified speaker standing before a seated audience. The Roberts brothers (Grahame, Sam, and Dan) are seated at a table behind him.

SPEAKER: I'd like to welcome you all. I'm sorry the weather was so bad. You're all brave souls to venture out today. Welcome to the November "I Remember Hour." We have three speakers today, the Roberts Brothers, who have a long and interesting history with DeKalb County. I think without any further introductions [*rest inaudible*].
[Sits]

[*Speaker and Roberts brother(s) exchange brief, inaudible comments.*]

GRAHAME ROBERTS: [Inaudible] at least keep you in the room. I'd like to introduce--I'm Grahame Roberts; my brother Sam, who is four years older than I, and Dan, who is two years younger than I am. They are part of Roberts Engineering aspect of this group. They're both Georgia Tech graduates. Sam's a mechanical advancement industrial engineer. Sam graduated in '38 and Dan in, what, 1950? He was--got interrupted by altercations among the world powers [*audience laughter*]. I'm also very closely connected to Georgia Tech, since I worked there from 1956 to 1984, when I retired from the library staff.

These two gentlemen ran Roberts Engineering, I guess it was for a period from about 1956, Sam?

SAM ROBERTS: 1956

GR: '56. It's now located over on Piedmont Avenue, right where--just about where I-85 crosses Piedmont. And their sons essentially have taken over now. They're both retired, but they go to work [inaudible] [*audience laughter*]. They're crazy. I retired, I quit! [*Audience laughter*] I didn't keep going.

SAM ROBERTS: I might say that we're in the air-conditioning business. We're designers and installers of commercial industrial air-conditioning systems.

DAN ROBERTS: We go to work because he [GR] gets paid by the state; we depend on our children [inaudible] [*audience laughter*].

GR: Everybody to his own. OK, we are in a sense the latecomers to DeKalb County. We are twentieth-century DeKalb people. In 1903, I think, is probably the date that my grandfather moved to Kirkwood. He was in Atlanta from about 1899, lived in various parts generally around Ponce de Leon and Boulevard and in that general area, two or three different places. And then--I think it's 1903, I can't quite tell--he moved to

Kirkwood. And there's a direct DeKalb connection there because my father, who also is a Georgia Tech graduate, Class of 1906, and his brother, who is also in that same class, I believe had DeKalb Scholarships. Now, I don't know anything about this other than that--Sam, you may know a little bit more than I do.

SR: It's my understanding that they went to Georgia Tech on scholarships from DeKalb County. They both graduated in 1960. They both took electrical engineering. *[Background noise renders audio inaudible; at the audience's and panelists' requests, the source of the noise is shut off.]* That's when we came to DeKalb. We are probably as a whole family very similar to many DeKalb County people, in that we are largely Southern--Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina background with--in the--our grandparents' generation from--my mother's family from Camden, South Carolina, and at that time my grandfather was from New Bern, North Carolina, but he had gone to Rome, Georgia, about 1877, and then he was in Anniston, Alabama. So immediately he was Alabama-South Carolina connection. But we do have some older Georgia connections, largely through South Carolina, there's Tuscarora Jack *[inaudible--King? Kinney? Kennedy?]* as part of a raiding reprisal expedition against the Creeks in 1703--1702, '03--I guess that's probably the first relative who found Georgia soil. And then in the 1760s there was a fellow named Thomas Camber *[spelling?]* in Savannah, who got a land grant down on the Altamaha River, right next to Butler's Island, and it's still Camber's *[spelling?]* Island down there. And you also have land on the Ogeechee, but he went back to South Carolina and died down in Purrysburg *[spelling?]* in 1770. But his daughter married an Alan *[Allen]* Brisbane *[spelling?]*, who was from Charleston, and they were--he was in Savannah in 1770. And I think he has a fairly unique, I guess it's a distinction, of being both in the Colonial Georgia legislature, and then he was later on in the South Carolina legislature, which, I suppose that's not too common.

Our other Georgia connection was--waiting till 1857, when the family of Nobles moved into Rome, Georgia. It was a large family; James Noble and his wife had fourteen children, and then they had the audacity to adopt one *[audience laughter]*. So, they had fifteen children total. I never understood that adoption. I guess there's never enough.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: You know what they said, "One more won't make any difference."

GR: I guess that was probably the attitude. Anyway, they were metallurgists, ironworkers, steel people, and they moved down and were instrumental in the formation of Anniston, Alabama, in the 1870s. So that was a previous connection in Georgia. But I say we get into DeKalb County about 1903. Then we stayed in--lived in Kirkwood until 1909, when my grandfather died, and then there's a slight gap in here during that period. My father and his brother Ennis had graduated from Tech in 1906. They both went to Pittsburgh to Westinghouse and were in a three-year apprentice program, which was evidently the common thing to do at the time. And then after their father died, they both came back South after a year or two in Gadsden--two years in Gadsden--my father came back to Atlanta with Atlantic Steel Company since 1910. And his brother went to Anniston and remained there for a number of--for the rest of their lives they stayed put in those respective places.

My father married in 1916 Frances Boykin, who was from Camden, South Carolina. She was in a large colony of South Carolinians over here, and she was visiting [sounds like "an ugly man"?] when they met. I don't remember any of this [*audience laughter*], but I've heard tell. And they were married, and Sam was their first child, in 1918. And we have a brother John who lives now in Cuernavaca, Mexico; he's been our foreign brother now for almost I guess [*Number of years inaudible due to audience member's sneeze.*] years. He's been either in Colombia or Mexico from about roughly 1951 or [5]2--well, that's forty years; but he comes back frequently. I tried to get him to come back up here to this, but he was here about six weeks ago. But he decided his wife wouldn't let him come back so soon after he'd been here.

DR: His daughter that lives here.

GR: Yeah, he has a daughter. Incidentally, there are--let's see, out of--my mother and father had five children, there are twelve grandchildren and twenty-one great-grandchildren. And with their wives, when we get together at weddings and--there are about fifty of us. Forty-seven, I think is the actual count. [*Responding to prompt from brother.*] Forty-eight, forty-eight--we added one this year.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Grahame, what business is your brother in in Mexico?

GR: He is--hard to describe [*audience laughter*]. He's an economist by training, and he's doing a lot of economic studies for various American companies. But he has managed--I guess he's a professional manager. He's managed a [inaudible] steel-

strapping plant down there. When it got to be making money, the government took it over. Then, for Bluebell, he ran two cotton mills--actually, they're not mills, they're--

SR: [Inaudible] plant

GR: Garment producers. They made blue jeans. Had the same thing happen there. In both cases, after they got prosperous, the government took them over. He's also worked for Coca-Cola, he's worked for--what's the industrial diamond company?

[Inaudible comment from audience, off-camera]

GR: I don't know, he worked for an industrial diamond company. He managed plants abroad, and then he's been a consultant to these companies, too, and done a lot of traveling. He's traveled all over South America making economic analyses of the markets who are moving in. He's an interesting person. As I say, I couldn't get him to come back up and join us.

DR: He's retired, so he still gets occasional checks from industrial diamonds [inaudible] in South America.

GR: At any time when you see a groove in the highway or out on the airport, that's the kind of diamond this is. They groove those, you know, to keep them from hydroplaning and so forth.

[Inaudible comment from DR]

GR: Well, anyway, then Dan had a twin, Jim, who died last year; that was the five of us. He was also a part of Roberts Engineering Company. Both Sam and John were born in the city of Atlanta. They were living, I guess, over on Highland Avenue--

SR: Fulton County

GR: Fulton County. But then, in about 1921--I don't know how they discovered this spot out here in DeKalb County on Old Stone Mountain Road. And as I understand it, they rented it for the summer. Now, Sam, you come in any time you want to. You remember more about this than I do. You may be old enough to remember this. I was born out there in that house on Old Stone Mountain Road.

DR: Well, Mother said they were a while on Morningside Drive.

GR: They had a lot on Morningside Drive.

DR: Mother was running into too many rich people, said she couldn't afford it, so went out to [inaudible] [audience laughter].

GR: Well, that's--anyway, they went out there for the summer and ended up buying the place. It was about five acres initially, and then it was added onto, about six

acres total. [Inaudible] old farmland, it was highly eroded and in pretty bad shape as farmland. But it had a big old house on it that was our home from 1921 to 1934, when this house burned.

Now, what we are dealing with is a strip of territory that we were familiar with, which I say runs basically from the courthouse here to the railroad depot over there, about a mile wide, about five and a half miles long, out the Georgia Railroad, the Old Stone Mountain Highway to, I'd say, Idlewood Drive. I say Idlewood because as children we rode our bicycles out there and go swimming in the old Idlewood pool, which was on Peachtree Creek about half a mile, maybe quarter of a mile, from what's now East Ponce de Leon. And we are, I think, trying to remember as what we as children remembered of what happened to us at least in that period. And most of it took place in this limited geographic area. But this is basically where we--this is walking distance [inaudible] and bicycle as well.

We went to the Clarkston School, but we were not certain--we were far outside the Clarkston city limits. We were probably three-quarters of a mile, and we were about equidistant between the Scottdale Mill and center of Clarkston. So, we were out in the country, and we were, at least as far as I'm concerned, we were really never a part of Clarkston itself; we were essentially outsiders in that respect. I'd say the school was our connection with Clarkston. But really our focus was mainly on Decatur; this is where we went to church. We went to Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. Of course, an Episcopalian in DeKalb County--people out in the country were nothing but Methodists and Baptists. They looked on us with a little--not jaundiced, but different eyes [audience laughter].

DR: Well, [inaudible] Episcopal churches, we've got Baptists and Methodists and Presbyterians--what else do you need? [Audience laughter; inaudible comment]

GR: And our focus was largely on--toward Atlanta, rather than the other way, in spite of the school.

SR: You might say that our father commuted to the Atlantic Steel Company in Atlanta every day. He commuted from Clarkston to Atlanta every day, so we were directly tied to Atlanta as well as Clarkston. We went to school in Clarkston, and [inaudible] as young people do, whereas my father went to town every day to work.

DR: So, he turned into an old Atlanta boy [rest inaudible].

GR: Our connections were westward rather than to the east, that's all the point I'm trying to make. Of course, this is the Depression years, largely, when we grew up. Sam grew up a little bit before that, but my main memories are Depression times, because I started school in 1928, and I remember that very vividly. And particularly because why you remember these things, this was 1928 election, and it was taken very seriously in that school. And it was very political, very. Clarkston--I don't know whether DeKalb County was Republican or not, but this was Al Smith's election, and we were-- the people in Clarkston were very concerned about the Temperance Movement and the possible repeal of Prohibition, and there were, I'd say, some were anti-Catholic. And we felt--I felt, I've got a scar right now from this, because I was in the first grade, I was made--I guess I was going along with everybody else, because we swore we would never drink, we would never smoke, we would brush our teeth, *[audience laughter]* we would use Lifebuoy--all sorts of things like that. And there was some repercussion, because my father made me repudiate that publicly at school, the neighborhood school. And so, I remember this very, very vividly. It was part of the fervor of anti-Catholic and anti-alcohol.

DR: I was *[inaudible phrase]* I signed it.

GR: Well, I signed it, but then I erased it.

[Inaudible comments among audience members]

GR: Well, Clarkston--DeKalb County then was in that transition period--you know, cotton was pretty well dead; it was dying. We remember one time picking cotton across the street. We were just little children; it was a way of trying to make a nickel or two. *[Inaudible]* that's the year that it crashed, and--*[To SG]* was it Mr. Whitehead who was?--*[SG nods.]* said he couldn't pay us the penny a pound; it was hardly worth picking. But we did it anyway. This was the last time that cotton was ever raised in Atlanta that I know. And there was sort of a transition period where DeKalb County was becoming largely dairy farming, lot of dairies around, small dairies who fed into some of the larger dairies. And we were right next door to a small dairy run an Echols family, and right down the street toward Clarkston was Turner's dairy--I don't know how many of you remember that, right before you get to the city limits of Clarkston.

DR: Off Ponce de Leon? *[SR makes inaudible but apparently affirmative response.]*

GR: But Clarkston was a small town of about three hundred people, probably ninety-nine percent white, and it was a completely commuting community. Most of the people worked in Atlanta or in Decatur or wherever they had jobs. And I would say probably the unemployment rate then was quite high, the period that I remember, because I can remember people--the children at school with very poor lunches, a potato, sweet potato oftentimes, or biscuit. This is what they had to eat. Now, we were very fortunate in that father was working in reasonably good circumstances. But people could survive because they had vegetable gardens, and most people had chickens and a cow, pigs, [inaudible]. So, people did survive.

There was in Clarkston no industry that I can remember, except there were two produce farms, one run by Sams--[*prompted by SR*] R. S. Sams--and the other was up--basically, I'm not quite sure--about where the DeKalb Farmers Market, that whole area in there was the Scotts', who had Scottdale Mills. One of the brothers ran a truck farm there. And I'll say if you want to call those industries, that was the industrial aspect of that area, other than Scottdale Mills, which was, of course, very close by, too.

DR asks inaudible question about a duck mill.

GR: Yeah, the duck mill was there. That was--I consider that Avondale. The Old Stone Mountain Road home--East Ponce de Leon--is essentially, as I say, about halfway between Scottdale and Clarkston. You know where Milam Circle is, it was opposite that on the south side of the railroad track and the streetcar line on a pretty good-sized hill. It was about where--you know where the ADT Southeastern headquarters is today? Because that's right--I think on that property's--it's not quite where their house was, but it's basically right there. It's an industrial park right now.

We were--I don't know, it was a paradoxical situation. We were--lived in the front yard, I was thinking twentieth century. We had a highway across the road, I guess probably a hundred yards, and the railroad track and then another street, what's now called Church Street, was then unpaved, and the Stone Mountain streetcar line, and then our house. So, we had all sorts of things--and you know, occasionally an airplane would fly over. So, we were real modern [*audience laughter*]. That's when everybody, when an airplane flew over, whatever you're doing, you stopped, and you ran outside, and you looked up to see [*audience laughter*]. You get used to it. But this was--let's say it's in this corridor along this that we grew up--along the Georgia Railroad from Decatur to Avondale Estates, which was being developed during that

period, from Ingleside--any of you remember Ingleside?--to Scottdale and then Clarkston, and then, I said, after Idlewood. That's the general area in which we grew up.

The property, say five-by-five, nearly six acres--we added--my father bought about three-quarters of an acre, a strip, to build, I guess, a driveway--it's now a road down there, it's a paved road, but we had a neighbor behind us whose only access was through our yard, through our driveway. And I guess our parents were afraid we were going to get run over. [*Inaudible comment from unknown speaker about "two teenagers" who were involved in an accident.*] So, they built--really built an entrance, an access road for the Forrests [sp?] to use. Now, this property, [to SR] and I guess we were probably about what, five?--about three hundred yards wide and--

SR: I'd say about five hundred feet.

GR: Come pretty close. And then, I'm thinking back to McAdams property, and this fellow built three houses along there, big old two-story houses, and they were about a quarter of a mile apart, running north to south, and we were the northernmost one right on the--set right on the streetcar line. And then there was one behind us, about a quarter of a mile. A quarter of a mile further was a third house that he had built. Mr. McAdams [sic] was from Omaha at the time we acquired this house. Sam remembers much more about McAdams than I do. I looked back in the book on DeKalb, *The Start of DeKalb*, whatever it's called, and there's a McAdam, Paul McAdam, in the sixth grade in 1916. So, I expect they were living there then, but we are--say, we got this property in '21, we added on to it about 1930, and then you say these three houses, we had the one facing the street.

See, Mr. McAdams [sic] was from--was a Nebraskan. I guess the only unusual thing about the property, he liked the trees that grew in Nebraska. So, he brought Nebraska trees there--God knows why anybody would bring trees from Nebraska to Georgia, where we grow them ten-to-one--but he had catalpa trees there. He had a whole row of those. He had silver maples, Lombardy--*[brief, inaudible exchange between GR and SR]* well, he just had Lombardy poplars; he got those from somewhere else. But he had lilacs, he had Osage orange. Now, we called this a sticker tree. And I don't know how big it was, but it seemed an enormous tree, it seemed to us. It was probably as big around as this table. And Osage orange generally doesn't grow this big. I don't know what happened to this one--it must've hit some mineral water

[inaudible]. Anyway, there was a huge tree, and it had long thorns on it, and it arched over part of our house. But, without question, it is an Osage orange, the only thing I've been able to figure out. And it had a lot of progeny around; it sprouted all over the place. These little sticker trees would come up. He also had some elms there that I've never seen anywhere else, that weren't native. In other words, he planted--he wanted to make part of Nebraska in DeKalb County [*audience laughter*].

__?: Where'd all those pear trees come from?

GR: Well, then he--then there were--these were pear trees. And these were trees, these weren't--I guess he just let--he planted about seven pear trees, and they were enormous, but they bore beautifully. We lived off of pears in the summertime. I remember at least twice, people came in commercially with trucks and bought the crop [rest inaudible]. They were good eating pears. Then he had a couple of hard pear trees as well. The catalpa trees were a big attraction also in August when the caterpillars got on them, and fishing folks came from all around to get those.

Then next door there was a pecan grove or orchard, whatever you want to call it. And I expect--I don't know whether the McAdams had anything to do with this or not--but it was on the adjoining property, the Perry Nicholson property, the one that was to the west of us. And I guess there were probably seven or eight acres there of pecan trees. And I expect this was part of that attempt in the '20s, when people all over Georgia planted pecan groves. You can drive down practically any road in Georgia most anywhere, and you see these geometrically arranged trees; and nine out of ten times, they are pecan trees. And I expect this was an attempt--it's just too far north to do anything with them. We got pecans, but they were never very--of course, there was never a very good crop.

SR: You might say about those houses, in all those houses there was a trap door in the floor, so in case of tornado you could drop down in the basement. This man was from the--

Interruptions from the audience: Tornado alley! Nebraska!

SR: And there was a trap door in every house, where you could drop down in case--drop down into the basement from the upper floors. I've never seen it in any other house in Georgia.

GR: Anyway, we've got these pecan trees. This is something I [inaudible]: next time you ride MARTA on the East Line to town, coming back out this way, when you get

to Moreland Avenue, right now you can see it pretty well. I think that's an attempt at a pecan orchard or grove in there, because for about four blocks in there, you can see these trees in there. You can see these trees, which are pecan trees. I can tell, about two weeks ago, because they hadn't lost all their leaves yet. They were sticking up above everything else, and they're very symmetrical in there for about four blocks. And I'm willing to bet somebody back in, say 1915 or so, tried to grow pecans in there. I don't think that you could have that many people to agree to plant pecan trees--I don't want to put--look at it next time you go on there.

Sam, why don't you describe our house and so forth? You're a member of the--this was pre-electricity, pre-plumbing, pre-water, pre-whatever when we moved out there--because you're an old fellow [*audience laughter*]. You were five years old, at least.

SR: Anyway, the house--the house was a big two-story house. I guess it probably had, oh, 5,000 square feet on the two floors. It had a basement, as we just said, because you could drop in the basement. But it had four big white columns across the front and two big porches, a porch on both floors, and the big columns going up all the way along the front. And, of course, you've got the standard old living room, dining room on the front and down the hall with the stair going up, and then the two other rooms were the kitchen and bathroom along the rear. And upstairs there were four bedrooms and two baths.

And our father--when they bought this place in 1920--or rented it, and then bought it about 1922, as Grahame says that there was no electricity in that area at that time. And there was--we drew water from a well, and there was--it was really out in the country. There was no plumbing, it was--because there was no electricity and no running water, and it was primitive. And my father and mother, as they could afford it, rebuilt this old house until it was a right modern house by 1934. And about 1934 the house caught on fire and burned to the ground.

GR: It had just been remodeled and so forth the year before, and that's when the second bath was put in and the central heat and all that sort of stuff.

SR: They put in a steam boiler in 1934. Somehow where they tied it into an old chimney flue, that chimney flue wasn't good enough, and it caught the house on fire, and it burned it--at least, that's what we think. But my father had electricity run from about half a mile up the road. I don't know if any of y'all ever heard of Tobie Grant,

who was a fortuneteller. [*Various inaudible responses*] She lived about half a mile up the road; and I guess in 1927 or something like that, my father had electricity run for half a mile to the house from Tobie Grant's down to our place.

And at that time, when you had electricity, you could do a lot of things. You can pump water and have lights and other things, but then they--even before that, he had tried to develop a well which would be year-round, but wells were--in the summer, usually in August or September, the well ran dry. So, my father was always--each year, while it was dry, he'd hire people to dig it a little bit deeper. And that went on for several years, and finally they decided that was not the answer but to go down and dig another well, which was about a quarter-mile down below us on the same property. And then they pumped water out of the new well into the old well, and so we had water. But it was primitive living for a long time.

We weren't alone in that respect because we were well off for many people in DeKalb County. They didn't have it either. I can remember when the water system--well, when I went to school in Clarkston, Georgia, in 1924, I was in the first grade--and in the first grade, my first-grade class occupied what they called the "new" building at that time. We were in--the first time in the new building. And at that time the new building had a water system and a plumbing system. But there was an old building which didn't have either one of those. They didn't have any water; they drew water out of the well. This was the schools in DeKalb County in 1924--in the 1920s--let's say about 19--

GR: In '32 they got running water.

SR: --well, about '32 they got running water. But up until that time, at the school--we were in this old building--we drew water out of a well, with a crank, you know.

GR: And a dipper

SR: And a dipper. And there was no water or bathrooms, there was just an old outhouse for the school at that time, in this old building. Now, the new building, it had modern facilities and had electric lights in it. But the old building didn't have any electric lights in it, even.

GR: No, it never had any.

SR: No, there was no power to the building. It was just a big room like this with no lights, a pot-bellied stove sitting back at the back, and that was it.

GR: Incidentally, I was grossly offended about a year or two ago when I saw in the paper they were going to tear down the “old Clarkston school”--not the old school I went to many years before [*laughter*], but this was the new school as far as I was concerned. This one was built probably about 1940 or something like that. The old school, as far as the original school, had long disappeared. I guess “old” is a matter of perspective.

Why don't we run down some of these names? What we tried to do, we got together a couple of times and tried to remember names, because this is what people get interested in, our Clarkston neighbors. And we remember those people, I think, whose children we went to school with. We don't remember parents particularly--occasionally, we will know something about the parents. But we've made a--with their collaboration and made a list of our neighbors and going on down into Clarkston and people who, say, we knew in school, at least their names.

And we'll start at the west end, which was on what is now Church Street; it was Tobie Grant. Tobie Grant was the name, just about a half-mile away.

SR: There as a colored woman, as you probably know. Told fortunes.

GR: And did very well.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: She was very widely known.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Did you get her to tell your fortune as a kid?

GR: I never did, no. I'm not even sure. Dad had a story about our mother, but I'm not--

SR: She told Ann's fortune many times.

GR: Which Ann?

[*Several simultaneous inaudible comments, followed by laughter*]

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: And did she believe her?

[*Inaudible comment*]

HR: She had a lot of problems. Then there was another house I remember. Who remembers that little yellow house, which was just east of Tobie's? [*Inaudible comment*] Across from Stone Mountain, set back across the highway, and on the other side was a Nash family sitting on top of the hill, almost up to the corner of--[*To audience member*] Dave, what street do you live off of?

Dave [in audience]: McLendon

GR: No--

DR: You mean Valley Brook?

GR: Valley Brook! Valley Brook wasn't there, so it's hard to place--*[audience laughter]*. In fact, none of these roads were there. There were some trails that run off south, but they were hardly passable. A wagon could get over them, but most automobiles would have a hard time getting them.

Then we come to the Nashes back across the road, the Nicholson property, Dr. Perry Nicholson, an Atlanta physician. I don't think he ever lived there, but the property was rented out to various people. I remember the Waits family and the Myers *[sp?]* family lived there. I don't know what used to be there.

SR. DR: *[Inaudible comments about possibly "Thermal" or "Terrell"?]*

GR: There's street that runs back through there to North Decatur Road, comes in just about at the freeway, where I-285 cuts through there. And I believe it's called Glendale, but that was just a mud road back there, where you turn back to a Black community, over there, which is still basically there.

DR: *[Inaudible; audience member's coughing interferes with audibility]* We played with those children, and we *[inaudible]* to get there *[inaudible]* cafeteria *[inaudible]* garbage cans *[inaudible]* feed the pigs *[inaudible]* was back there.

GR: Then next--not quite opposite, but a little bit west of us, on the highway, Old Stone Mountain Road, was the Heaths, and Sam remembers an area family there, the Griffins.

SR: I just wonder if this is interesting to you people, all these names of people and who lived in where, because you don't have any way to place it, as we do. But is it interesting to you?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: You went to school in Clarkston. How did you escape the Henslers *[sp?]*? *[Audience laughter]*

GR: We got *[inaudible phrase]* *[audience laughter]*. We took that same oath you took *[audience laughter]*. I don't know, I was only six years old.

[Inaudible comment]

GR: They Myerses *[sp?]* lived first in the Nicholsons' house, and then they lived in that little house next to the *[inaudible]*. I'll just run down some of these names, and you may've--Griffin, Heath, Whitehead was a big old house across on the Stone Mountain Highway with two tenant farms there, and next to them was the Turner property, that was this large dairy--

SR: Ponce de Leon

GR: --Ponce de Leon Dairy, and there were Adams, Foresters, Echols. Going down Church street there were Echols, Hampton, Moody, Mize, Pendleton, Partridge, Ross. And across the road were Turner, Crawford, and Haney--that's back where there's another railroad crossing down there. And then back into Clarkston itself, some of these names we remember: Thompson, Skillern, Beacham [sp?], Armistead, Brand, Bradford, Ford, Spivey, Johnson--there was a family, very athletic family of Johnsons, Charles, Robert, and Jimmy. Jimmy was, I remember, still refereeing basketball around here a few years ago when he was still in--he was then sixty, still refereeing basketball, high school basketball. Wakefield, Perrin, there was another Roberts family, Pace, Williams, Sams, Goser [sp?], Hensler, Hornbuckle, Winfield, Kilgore, [inaudible], McLendon, Miles, Livsey [sp?], Keene [sp?], Knuckles, Weldon, Ravel, Cowan, Kidwell, Collinsworth--that's one [inaudible], Koch--that's K-O-C-H, was a German family with four or five children, four sons that were just about parallel to us, so we played with them; and I can still recite the alphabet in German, but I learned it at about five years old from then. [*In response to audience member's comment*]: Beg your pardon?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Right in Clarkston, real estate, Koch. That's [inaudible] family there.

GR: Moore, Wimpy, Henry, Robertson--we just sat down, and these names came back to us.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Didn't the [inaudible] have a great big home?

GR: Yessir. That was the biggest house around.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: And it was one of the--it burned, too?

GR: Yeah, it burned after ours did. It was about between Idlewood and Rays Road, somewhere in there. I'm not quite sure.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: I thought it was about the same place you were describing your home?

GR: No, it's about the same distance on the other side.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Yeah, I see.

GR: But it was a big old two-story house. His was brick, though. Really one of the biggest brick houses--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: It was very handsome.

DR: Where we lived was one block inside of 285.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Let me ask you a question. If you lived that close to the Stone Mountain car line, why did you have to go that far to get electricity?

GR: I don't know.

SR: I'll tell you why. The streetcar line runs on a 600-volt DC, and the power line--
-[*Several speak at once; inaudible.*] [*Audience laughter*] It was a big power line of [sounds like "AC hundred"?] and maybe 325 volts, but you couldn't tie onto that. Got to get down to 220, so you had to go back up the road to a transformer.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Yeah, that's what I thought you would do, but I thought you could [inaudible] it by a transformer--

SR: You could do it, but the power company wouldn't do it.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: [Inaudible] my answer to that question, the answer is, for power, look at power lines. You had to pay for it. The telephone company paid for poles, telephone lines came in free, but the power lines you had to pay for them.

SR: That's right. [Inaudible comment] My father had to pay for it to run a half-mile to get it, to get the power--to pay the power company to do it.

There's another name that some of you people might remember. There was a gentleman out there who owned a great deal of property named Frank McLendon. You ever heard of Frank McLendon? He owned--

GR: He must've had three McLendons named after him--

SR: --three McLendons named after him. He owned, I guess, I don't know, thousands of acres of property out there. And how he got it, I don't know. But he lived in Clarkston, but he owned all this property all the way almost to Scottdale.

GR: Well, he also owned the land back across Peachtree Creek, all the way over to the Lawrenceville Highway now.

SR: And there was a store out there, dry goods, grocery store, was run by a fellow named Tom Jolly. That name may mean any--he was there for years and years and may still be there for all I know. And he had a brother named Clem Jolly. They lived right up on the main road in Clarkston. These are well-known names out there. And because this fellow McCurdy was in Stone Mountain, he was big around here.

GR: McCurdy owned property. There were McCurdys in Clarkston, too.

SR: McCurdy was a big name out there at that time.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Was this Koch [*Pronounces it "Coke."*] fellow--did he have any connection with this fellow that played the carillon in Stone Mountain?

GR: I don't think so.

SR: "Cook"

GR: No, "Cook," we called him, and they pronounced it "Cook." No, he worked for the Railway Express Company. He was just come over from Germany after World War I, and they had a very primitive little place out there. And I remember they raised goats, and [*laughing*] brought the goats with them, I guess. I say, the fact that we were matching in age with four boys, and with Dan being a twin, it matched up perfectly. I know one of the oldest ones was in the Marine Corps for probably his entire adult life.

DS: I saw him a year or so ago, and he was [*rest inaudible*].

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: You asked about Ingleside a while ago. Ingleside was a village, and it was bought by a man named Willis.

GR: Right

SR: Willis invented Cadillac. Cadillac came along before Geritol. [*Audience laughter and inaudible comments*]

SR: I remember [*inaudible*]. What was his first name?

GR: Charles Willis--no-- [*Several simultaneous comments; inaudible*]

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: We did our shopping [*inaudible*]. But that Ingleside and then Scottdale and then Clarkston, that was the line of communities.

GR: That's right, that's the line of communities. Of course--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: But Ingleside was bought completely in one block by Mr. Willis and lived in Druid Hills, and he built this town. It was all built at once.

GR: At one time, and it's maintained its character--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: About 1923 or '24

GR: --'23 to--

--? Did you go to Allgood?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Dr. Allgood?

GR: Sam, you might chime in on Dr. Allgood's office. I think you was telling somebody the other day.

SR: We were talking about Dr. Allgood the other day, and his name was--what's his name?

GR: Conrad something--C. L.--Lucionus or something like that.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: He practiced in Decatur, but he practiced--I thought everybody out there knew him.

GR: Yeah, he had more cars and more--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: He wore out several cars--

SR: Model T Fords

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: --yeah, Model T Fords

SR: He practiced all over DeKalb County, and he traveled all day all over DeKalb County, tending to everybody, including our family. And then, I guess about five o'clock in the afternoon, he came in to his office out there just between Avondale or Ingleside and Scottdale, and it was--you go out there in the afternoon to try to see the old man, and he was a great big old fat man, and dirty, always dirty. And you see cars, and there wasn't any paved for them, they were kind of a bunch of hills out there, and people would be parked all over, I mean two or three dozen cars waiting to see Dr. Allgood. And there were Black people and white people. And you go around all day, like I say, tended everybody in the county, Black and white. There wasn't any different for him. I think he charged three dollars a visit for house calls. And you go into his office, and honest to goodness, I've been to his office many times, and his office was in the basement of his house. Do you remember that? [*Several people speak at the same time, rendering individual comments inaudible.*] And it really wasn't finished at all, [inaudible] the back side of it, back of his desk, was just a dirt bank. And I'm not joking. And he administering shots and giving you--looking at your throat, and giving it--tended everybody in the county, and he was a great old man. He was just as nice as he could be. And one time I remember he told my daddy, says, "You know, I keep on calling on these people, and they won't pay me, and you know, I'm about to go broke. They owe me \$3,000." [*Several people speak at the same time, rendering individual comments inaudible. Also a few audience members have private conversations within range of microphone, interfering with speakers' audibility.*]

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: They give him chickens and eggs.

SR: That's right, he'd probably got some of those. But it was typical medical administration at that time. It wasn't--people didn't go to the hospital; he went to your house. And I can remember being in bed many times and him coming to the house to see us.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Well, you asked if people were interested in those names, due to my age, I was interested because when kids in Clarkston got to high school, most of them came to Decatur. [*Several people speak at the same time, rendering individual comments inaudible. Also a few audience members have private conversations within range of microphone, interfering with speakers' audibility.*]

SR: [Inaudible] from Decatur High School.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: That's right. And I had Knuckles [sp?] and Lanes and Henslers [sp?] and all of them in my class in high school.

SR: In Decatur High?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Decatur High School. And [inaudible] back there around there along there a long, long time. There was a couple of brothers in the [*Inaudible; audience member coughing.*] We got a couple in the--active in the Methodist church, and-- [*Several people speak at the same time, rendering individual comments inaudible. Also a few audience members have private conversations within range of microphone, interfering with speakers' audibility, continuing sporadically throughout the rest of the presentation.*]

GR: Because, see, he's about fifty-something. [Inaudible] was in my class, [inaudible] was in my brother John's class, so I never could place him, but he's probably a nephew.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: What year did you go to Decatur High School?

SR: I graduated in 1934.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: '34? Well, they just had a reunion.

[*Audience member and GR speak at the same time; inaudible.*]

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: I graduated in '23, and that's--people went down to Clarkston and got Hal Hensler [sp?], because he was--they say he was the fastest. He [inaudible phrase], we did. They said Hal Hensler was so fast he'd run alongside a rabbit, pick it up, and see how fat he was and put him in a feed sack [*laughter*]. [*More audience reaction and conversation.*]

GR: When was the high schools in DeKalb set up?

[*Inaudible comments by unidentified participants*]

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: About 1916 was the first year there was a four-year high school graduated. The Decatur system came into being in 1902. And in 1910 they built the first Decatur school building--we called it the McDonough Street School--

was put where the present high school is. They tore it down many years ago. And you talk about feeling a little weird when they talk about tearing the old school down, I graduated from the school--which we called the "new school"--and it's been torn down for twenty years! *[Laughter]* But independent names are interesting if you lived right near *[inaudible]*.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: *[First few words inaudible]* You remember the Smiths *[inaudible]*. The Smiths *[inaudible]*

GR: We called him "One-Eyed Smith." Lived in Ingleside, and he was a *[inaudible]* man.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: *[Repeats inaudible initials, nickname, or first name; sounds like "E. G."?]* Smith?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: I don't know what his *[inaudible]*--I was a small child, but I remember him coming around, and was generally *[inaudible]* calf and slaughter it right there on the premises if you wanted to.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: You know when he lost his eye? Right here in Decatur, fighting with a policeman one night.

SR: Well, he would bring meat *[rest inaudible]*.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: He later lost a leg. He had diabetes *[inaudible]*. I knew him very well *[rest inaudible]*.

SR: You see, without electricity, we didn't have any refrigerator. You had to have an icebox. And a lot of times we had to come to Decatur down there on Sycamore Drive *[sic]* to get the ice, you know. And a lot of times we didn't have ice. But old Smith would drive up there in his buggy, and he'd lift up the flaps in the back of the buggy, and there was this calf all butchered up and lying in the back--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *interrupting, off-camera*: *[Inaudible phrase]* and somebody else'd--

SR: --and you'd buy what you wanted. And he *[inaudible]*. He'd just slaughtered it about two hours before someplace and would *[inaudible]*. We were one of his best customers, I guess. But he would come right down *[inaudible]* and drive three miles down *[rest inaudible]*.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: E. G. was his--

Amid several voices and threads of conversation, from various speakers:

__?: E.G. *[inaudible]* . . . one eye . . . He lost it--

GR: You remember, lived right up there almost next door to the antique dealer. He used to come around trying to buy--we had a lot of pretty good--a library on South Carolina. My great-grandfather was an antiquarian and local historian, and he collected all sorts of books. Good Carolinian. Some good stuff. And there's one thing he was always trying to buy two or three titles and also antique furniture. And I don't--that's about all I remember. I don't remember his name, but he lived up there back where "One-Eye" Smith lived at Ingleside.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: I didn't mean to get into [inaudible]. You just asked the question, [rest inaudible].

SR: You're the one ought to be up here [*laughter*].

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: [Inaudible] probably want to forget it--
[*More mixed conversation, most inaudible*]

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: He had specialty drug stores, all that, but he [inaudible] drug store right here than anything else. That's where he hung out [rest inaudible].

AUDIENCE MEMBER rises and raises her hand, trying to get speakers' attention; he doesn't see her.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera, referring to lady who is trying to ask a question*: [Inaudible] wants to ask you a question about trees.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Are those trees, any of those unusual trees, still out there, and how in the world do you [rest inaudible]?

GR: No, ma'am. I went [inaudible], walked all over that place, and I couldn't locate anything. I was completely disoriented. That's been probably--

Inaudible exchange between audience member and ___.

FIRST RECORDING ENDS; PICKS UP WITH SECOND:

Second recording begins with several people talking at once; individual threads difficult to follow.

GR, *continuing*: . . . that's an industrial park now. [Rest inaudible]

DR: We could take you out to East Lake, tell you all about it, if you want to know about that.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: What was the name of the school that the car barn--I mean the trolley barn is back there now? Is that Clarkston High School or part of Decatur?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: It's torn down now. But the MARTA yard is there now.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: No, that's this side of Avondale. Clarkston's the other side.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: OK, I got you now. I just need to be--

GR: We lived out there. East Ponce de Leon was not paved. In fact, it wasn't cut initially. There wasn't any street there, wasn't any East Ponce de Leon [inaudible]. You had to cut through--you had to follow, really, the railroad track [rest inaudible].

[*Audience conversation; inaudible*]

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*:: Memorial Drive stopped at--

SEVERAL VOICES: Candler Road

GR: In fact, it stopped--there wasn't any Memorial Drive between Howard Street and Second Avenue. Wasn't cut. I remember when that was cut. In fact, if you want to use the modern term "infrastructure," DeKalb County hardly had any. [*Laughs*]

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Can you tell us when North Decatur Road was cut under the railroad tracks there at Ponce de Leon?

--? North Decatur Road

GR: I can't.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*:: That's practically modern history.

[*Many people speak at once.*]

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*:: That's after World War II.

GR: Yeah, wasn't anything back there [inaudible]. Stopped right there.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: When was that Scottdale post office built?

GR: Scottdale post office? When it disappeared?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Built

SR: It was in the Scottdale store [inaudible].

[*Several inaudible comments from various people*]

GR [and occasionally SR chiming in]: You ever been to the Scottdale store? [*Several inaudible comments from various people*] It was really a delight to go into that big old store, though. It was a department store that catered to mill folks and country folks there. Had everything in there, horse collars, shoes, stoves, [inaudible], meat, cheese, groceries, [inaudible].

SR: Scottdale store. It was a complex--it was a mill town, Scottdale was a mill town, owned by the mill owned by the Scotts. The Scotts owned the mill and operated the mill, and they had the store there for everybody, and they had [inaudible] houses that the people lived in, I guess, and they traded in the store and took it out [inaudible].

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: It was a commissary. [*Several people speak in agreement.*]

SR: Yeah, it was a commissary [inaudible] store. It was more--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: And yet it was open to the public. A lot--
[*More inaudible simultaneous comments*]

DR: We would ride our bicycles up to the store, and we didn't have to tend it, because the [inaudible] boys took it away and rode it around, and when they got tired of [inaudible], they'd give it to you when you got home.

GR: I know we've run over.

Speaker who introduced the Robertsons at the beginning of the presentation: But it's been delightful. We've got some light refreshments, so if you want to continue informally for a while, we can certainly do that.

SR: Does anyone have anything they would like to question, any questions or anything they want to say?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: I'm [inaudible] about [inaudible phrase]. He's [inaudible] four stars and [inaudible] three stars.

GR: I don't know. I've wondered that myself.

[*Inaudible comment from audience member followed by laughter*]

Presentation ends, but recording continues for another several minutes, as people have refreshments and conversations.

END OF RECORDING

Transcribed by cgs